

MINUTES
FRANKLIN CITY PLAN COMMISSION
April 21, 2015

Members Present:

Jim Martin	President
Kevin McElyea	Vice-President
Chris Phillips	Secretary
Joe Abban	Member
Pam Ault	Member
Steve Davis	Member
Georganna Haltom	Member
Tim Holmes	Member
Debbie Swinehamer	Member

Members Absent:

Suzanne Findley	Member
Diane Gragg	Member

Others Present:

Alex Getchell	Associate Planner
Travis Underhill	City Engineer
Lynn Gray	Legal Counsel
Jaime Shilts	Recording Secretary

Call to Order:

Jim Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Pam Ault made a motion to approve the March 17, 2015 minutes as presented. Joe Abban seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Swearing In:

En masse, Ms. Gray swore in all individuals in the audience who were going to be presenting testimony.

Reports of Officers and Committees:

Alex Getchell, Associate Planner, stated the last Technical Review Committee meeting was held on April 2, 2015. He stated there were six items heard at the meeting. The Indiana Masonic Home was heard for new parking lots at 690 S. State Street. New revised plans have been approved. Johnson County Crossfit is proposing a new 9,800 sq. ft. facility at 771 Commerce Drive. Revised plans have not yet been submitted. The Johnson County Training Facility has submitted revised plans and they have been approved. The Heritage Subdivision, Section 6, for 28 lots, was submitted. It will be an extension of Blackthorn Drive. Revised plans have been received but not reviewed. The last two items on tech review were the Southgate Park PUD conceptual plan which will be heard tonight and the GMI parking lot addition which is also being heard tonight.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

PC 2015-10: Economic Development Plan-2015:

Travis Underhill, City Engineer, stated the plan sets forth an affirmation of the projects from an economic development standpoint that the City would like to pursue. Everything in the plan is referenced to the various plans: storm water, comprehensive plans, sanitary, economic development study, parking studies, etc. Mr. Underhill stated there is a bond initiative for \$15 million for economic development improvements that is being worked on by the RDC. One of the steps in the process is to make sure an economic development plan is in place. The plan must come before the Plan Commission and once approved, it will go to City Council for approval and then back to the RDC.

Ms. Gray stated there was a general informational meeting with bond council present at a City Council meeting two weeks ago. The TIF district will be extended by time, not the actual area.

Action taken on PC 2015-10: Economic Development Plan-2015:

Joe Abban made a motion to approve the economic development plan and to authorize Jim Martin to sign the document as President. Pam Ault seconded the motion. The motion carried.

PC 2015-09 (SPR): GMI Parking Addition:

Mr. Underhill stated GMI has acquired additional land and needs additional parking. The buildings and infrastructure are already in place. The property has a history of drainage issues. Andrew Barkosy, Surveyor, stated GMI is doing an addition for parking. He stated the property is very flat but due to the low elevation it can cause flooding. There is a swale on the north end of the property. Half the site flows north and half flows south. They are requesting a waiver as it is impossible to have the drainage flow properly.

Mr. Barkosy stated the granting of the waiver will not affect the general welfare. It won't affect the surrounding properties at all. The adjacent property will not injure anybody.

Mr. Barkosy stated the adjacent property won't be injurious to anyone.

Mr. Barkosy stated there are unique conditions as it's a flat area and is not capable of detaining water.

Mr. Barkosy stated the physical conditions are flat and it does not make following the ordinance possible.

Mr. Barkosy stated it will not contradict the City comprehensive plan at all.

Mr. Holmes questioned if there was any other option. Mr. Underhill stated he's been supportive of this case. He stated that storing the storm water makes a bigger problem because the water basin would make it higher than the finished level of their buildings. He stated it's not cost feasible and he doesn't think it's physically feasible. There is no other use for the property and using it as a parking lot is the most logical solution. Ms.

Haltom questioned if having more asphalt would cause more drainage issues. Mr. Underhill stated paving it is not going to make any difference in how it drains today. Staff recommends approval.

Action taken on PC 2015-09 (SPR): GMI Parking Addition:

Tim Holmes made a motion to approve the case as presented. Chris Phillips seconded the motion. The motion carried.

PC 2015-08 (PUD-Conceptual Plan): Southgate Park:

Ms. Gray stated the petitioner has a total of 20 minutes for presentation and rebuttal, and the remonstrators also have a total of 20 minutes. The Board has the right to add more time.

Roger Young, attorney representing Franklin College, stated that TKE currently leases part of a building. The building is owned by Franklin College and will be demolished in the summer of 2015 and their lease ends in May of this year. TKE has filed a rezoning of 11.905 acres for PUD. They desire to build a structure on the property. The property is located on the south side of Park Avenue and east of the college campus. The north side of Park Avenue has land zoned RS-1 owned by Franklin College, to the east and west are private residences and to the south a railroad track. The conceptual plan is complete and they are seeking approval. The plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Franklin master plan.

Mr. Jeff Arthur, representing TKE, stated that TKE was chartered in 1988 at Franklin College. He stated approximately 40% of the campus is Greek.

Mr. Young stated the property is currently zoned RS-1. They have not been able to find a suitable site for their fraternity house. The building will be located in the northeastern quadrant of the property. The remainder of the north half will contain a retention pond, buffering, landscaping, and outdoor recreation areas. The southern half will have four single family residential lots. He stated the conceptual plan is consistent with the intent of Article 6 and the comprehensive plan as a whole.

Mr. Young stated a crosswalk will be installed on Park Ave. The site has been approved by Franklin College as off campus housing. Mr. Young submitted a letter from Mr. Greg Leugers of the affect the proposed fraternity and PUD would have on surrounding property values to the Board as Exhibit A. Mr. Young called Mr. Ellis Hall, Vice-President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, to the podium. Mr. Hall stated that Franklin College students must either reside on campus or at home if they are not seniors unless they are living in a fraternity house. The TKE house has been approved by Franklin College. Mr. Hall stated there are no disciplinary actions current on the TKE fraternity. Mr. Young stated the plan is consistent with all applicable requirements.

Vic Vornehm, neighbor, stated he has questions about the development with the single family homes to the south of the property as they would be close to the train tracks. There are no sidewalks on Park Avenue and people speed through the area and he stated that will be a safety issue. He feels having the fraternity will devalue the homes in the area.

Paul Fonstad, assistant professor of math at Franklin College, stated they live next door to the proposed lot. He stated that students already use the area for exercise and expressed his concern that there are no sidewalks. He stated his other concern is that it is not close to anything else on campus and is very far removed from other campus activities. They are concerned on what that may mean for the future. Ms. Gray stated a letter from the Fonstads had been submitted for the record.

Mr. Abban questioned how many people had vehicles. Mr. Arthur stated there are 37 members and 33-34 of the students own vehicles.

Ms. Gloria Doyle, 1250 Park Avenue, stated her concern is safety and that members of the fraternity will walk down the middle of Park Ave, to get to campus. She questioned why the College didn't sell any of the additional land to the TKEs.

Ms. Gray stated the Plan Commission is at Phase 1 of approval. They can approve it, continue it, deny it or approve it with modifications.

Ms. Swinehamer questioned if there was ever any talk of the college selling land to the fraternity. Mr. Arthur stated in 2013 that the Board of Trustees was going to build a new house for the fraternities but that idea did not move forward. He stated the current house they are in was not designed as a fraternity house originally and that's the problem they found when looking at other properties. Mr. Arthur stated they had tried to buy land from Franklin College but were not able to do so.

Mr. Phillips questioned if Mr. Fonstad felt like it was going to be a negative impact on their property. Mr. Fonstad stated they do feel like there will be a negative issue with their property value. Mr. Abban questioned how many police runs at the fraternity last year. Mr. Young stated from Jan 2010-April 2015 there were about 9. Mr. Arthur stated they share a building and some of the calls are from the other fraternity.

Mr. Davis questioned what the advantage is to saying no at this point. Ms. Gray stated if the board decides there is no way this could work, they can deny it right now. Mr. Young stated he pulled the police runs to the American Legion located across the street from the property and it had about five times more than what the fraternity had.

Mr. McElyea questioned if something would be done about the safety concerns. Mr. Young stated they would be required to put in a sidewalk on their property, but would not be able to compel adjoining property owners to put in sidewalks. Ms. Haltom questioned if the TKEs had purchased the land. Mr. Young stated they had not yet. Ms. Haltom asked what the siding on the building would be like. Mr. Zigler stated there would be a split faced block and then hardy plank and no vinyl siding.

Ms. Swinehamer questioned what the backup plan is. Mr. Arthur stated they would live on campus for the year. Mr. Hall stated the college can house the members of both fraternities, however, the college does see the value of them living separately with the fraternity members. The college is not interested in selling property as in the past they have had to buy it back again. Ms. Haltom questioned if there are any other options for a location. Mr. Arthur stated they have looked at 5 or 6 properties but this offered a better situation.

Ms. Gray explained the resulting process if the proposal were approved or if it were continued.

Mr. Getchell stated the Board could also approve with modifications to the plan.

Ms. Haltom questioned if they have done any research that gives them an idea on how profitable the back four properties would be for them. Mr. Young stated they have not done any detailed market research, yet. Mr. Arthur stated that they do not have any interest in selling those back lots at this time. Mr. Arthur stated there might not ever be anything developed behind the TKE fraternity house.

Mr. Abban questioned if approved, would the fraternity do some outreach with the residents along Park Ave. Mr. Young stated that they sent out letters to residents of Park Ave to submit comments. Mr. Young stated he spoke with residents along Park Ave before presenting the Concept Plan. Mr. Young stated he spoke with Mr. Batta and he does not object to the concept. Mr. Young stated they are committed to work with all neighbors.

Mr. Phillips asked the Commission to take a moment to think about how this proposal would affect neighboring property values. Mr. Phillips stated Ms. Doyle was correct about her concerns with safety.

Action taken on PC 2015-08 (PUD-Conceptual Plan): Southgate Park:

Tim Holmes made a motion to approve the conceptual plan with no modifications, and subject to the written commitments. Steve Davis seconded the motion. Kevin McElyea-yes, Joe Abban-yes, Chris Phillips-no, Georganna Haltom-no, Tim Holmes-yes, Pam Ault-no, Steve Davis-yes, Debbie Swinehamer-yes, Jim Martin-yes.

The motion carried 6-3.

Other Business:

None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted this 19th day of May, 2015.

Jim Martin
President

Chris Phillips
Secretary